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November 7, 2019

Jeff Kinnard, Chairman
Citrus County Board of County Commissioners
110 N. Apopka Ave.
Inverness, FL 34450

Dear Chairman Kinnard,

On behalf of the Florida Library Association (FLA), representing more than 1,050 members and 60 public and academic institutions, we urge you to reconsider your position on the recent Citrus County agenda item (October 24, 2019, item E4) related to the library's electronic subscription to the *New York Times*. We firmly believe that your residents and library visitors should be allowed access to varying viewpoints as promised by First Amendment rights to Free Speech and Freedom of Belief.

Public libraries are government agencies subject to the First Amendment. Rejecting or censoring a publication based upon its political viewpoint represents both content and viewpoint discrimination that is contrary to the spirit of the First Amendment. We stand by the American Library Association's Freedom to Read Statement: we believe that democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative.

We know that you support Citrus County Library System in many ways, and your dedication to the library is appreciated. In working closely with your library director, Eric Head, we know you are aware of the wonderful programs and services provided by the hardworking staff and volunteers. Your library system offers a myriad of opportunities for Citrus County and your long-standing support of the library should not be marginalized as we seek to remedy this most recent situation.

Again, we ask that you take a considered and thoughtful approach to this item at your next Board of County Commissioners meeting this month and be mindful that personal, political views should never overshadow the freedom of information.

Sincerely,

Heather Snapp
Chair, Intellectual Freedom Committee

Lisa J. O'Donnell, CAE
Executive Director